

MMOZine

Issue 30 | June 2011

Free Magazine For MMO Gamers. Read it, Print it, Send it to your mates

HANDS-ON

STAR WARS: THE OLD REPUBLIC

THE ULTIMATE SPACE MMO? FIND OUT INSIDE!



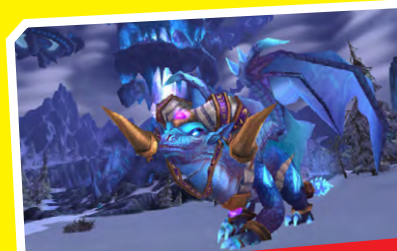
RUSTY HEARTS FIRST LOOK AND INTERVIEW

+ RUNES OF MAGIC

+ PREVIEWED

TERA

The Korean hit comes to the UK!



+ PREVIEWED

WoW 4.2

A more impressive update?



+ FEATURE

Allods Online

Why this should be the next MMO you play!

Welcome to MMOZine



Hype for a new MMO is a relatively rare thing, but it has to be said that the mutterings surrounding Star Wars: The Old Republic are beginning to grow to an almost deafening pitch. Although there's still some months to go until its launch (which could well be put back again), the gaming world is waiting to see if this could be the ultimate adventure in the Star Wars universe.

We were lucky enough to get extended hands-on time with the game in its American development studios, and this month we report back on how its shaping up. This is one feature you really cannot miss!

But obviously there's much, much more in this issue, so waste no more time and get stuck in.

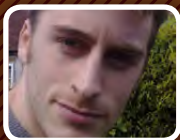
Dean Mortlock, Editor
mmozine@gamerzines.com

MEET THE TEAM

The MMOZine massive were told to go forth and multiplayer, which they did...



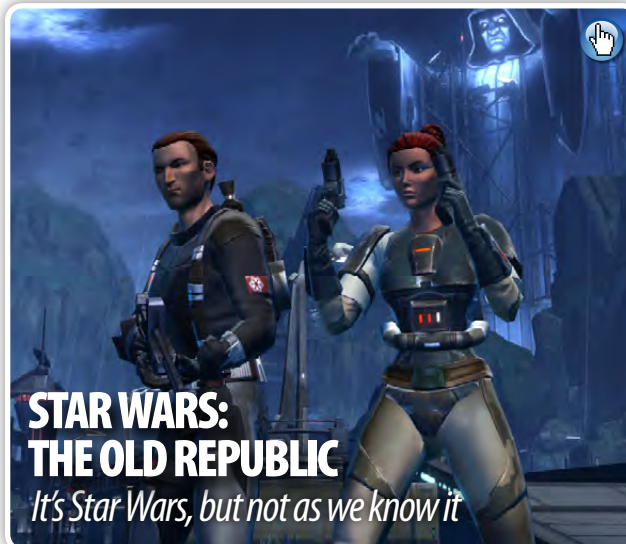
LESLEY SMITH
What she doesn't know about WoW really isn't worth knowing.



ANDY GRIFFITHS
Say hello to Andy. Our PC gaming expert also edits our sister mag, PCGZine.

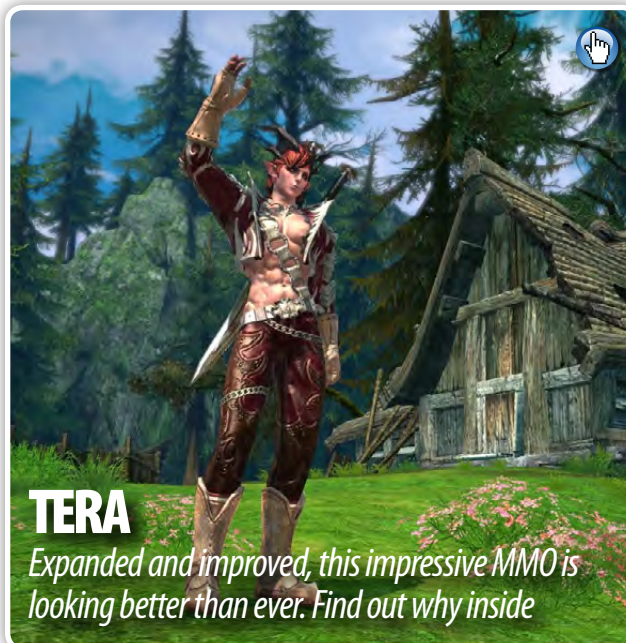
DON'T MISS!

This month's highlights...



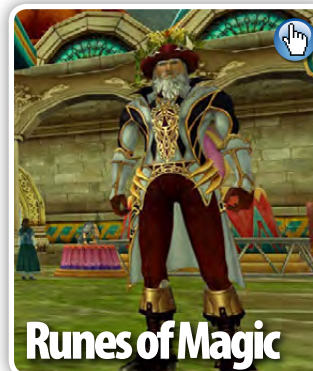
STAR WARS: THE OLD REPUBLIC

It's Star Wars, but not as we know it



TERA

Expanded and improved, this impressive MMO is looking better than ever. Find out why inside



Runes of Magic



Allods Online

QUICK FINDER

Every game's just a click away

Rusty Hearts
 Rift
 Forsaken World
 Guild Wars 2
 Lineage I
 Star Wars:
 The Old Republic
 Hellgate: London

TERA
 World of Warcraft
 4.2: Rage of the
 Firelands
 Runes of Magic:
 The Lands of
 Despair
 Allods Online

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Publisher: Perfect World Entertainment
Developer: Stairway Games
Heritage: N/A
Link: <http://rustyhearts.perfectworld.com>
ETA: 2011

PREVIEW FEEDBACK!
 Click here to tell us what you think of Rusty Hearts



CLICK HERE TO GO TO THE INTERVIEW!

Perhaps he's angered by your lovely flowing blonde locks?



"Rusty Hearts visual style is clearly inspired by manga, and anime in general"



Rusty Hearts

FIRST LOOK

There's nothing rusty about this MMO

What's the story?

Action is a very good keyword to drop at the start of this First Look, as although Rusty Hearts is technically an MMO, there's more of a nod towards the classic side-scrolling beat-'em-ups of yesteryear (Final Fight and Streets of Rage, to name but two) than anything you're likely to see in World of Warcraft. And yes, we know. It is a bit of a silly name.

What do we know?

Well, we know that Rusty Hearts' visual style is clearly inspired by manga, and anime in general – the maids costumes is a clear indication of this – and that the gameplay trailers released online clearly show an action-packed brawler of some class, but there's also more to Rusty Hearts than that.

More traditional MMO staples are evident when you look a bit deeper though, as you have a choice of four different characters (each with their own storyline), PvP combat, a raiding system, and the ability to craft and forge your gear.

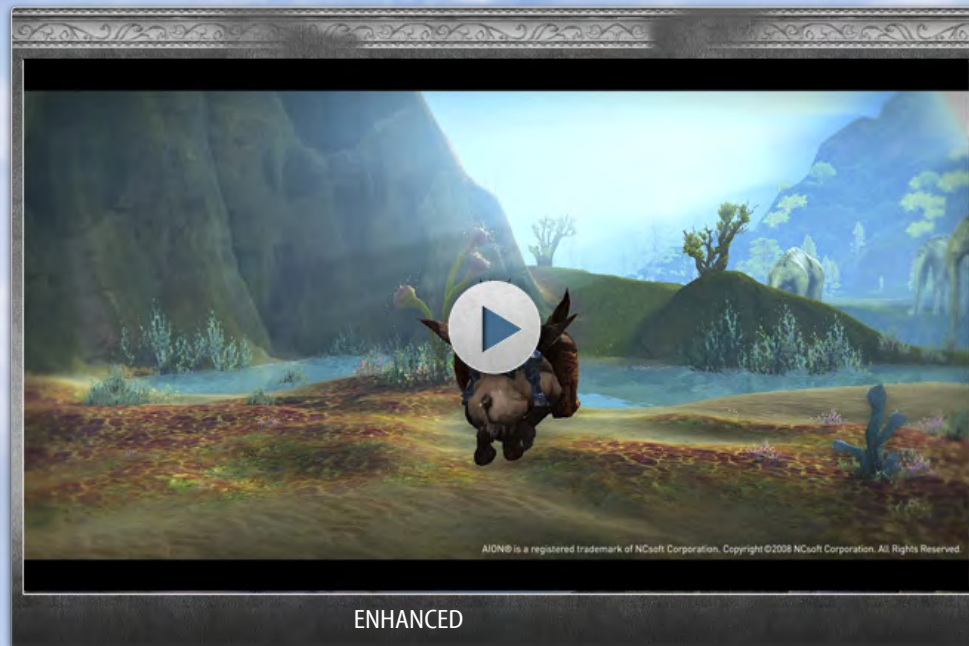
We were also rather impressed with the graphics too, as well-animated characters battled it out in lush 3D locations that panned and zoomed in beautifully. So far, so good then.

When do we get more?

We've got an interview with the game's Executive Producer this issue, which you can go straight to by clicking on the link on this very page. Rusty Hearts is currently in its Beta stage, and you can join in the fun by heading to the official site. We did, and we recommend that you do too.

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7UP

New MMOs and content updates to mark on your calendar with a **BIG RED PEN!**



Rift

Developer: Trion | ETA: Out Now

Do you want to sample the acclaimed MMO Rift, but are put off by the buying the game outright? Well don't be, as seven-day trial keys can now be acquired through the game's official website, so there's no need to hesitate putting this popular MMO through its paces.



Allods Online

Developer: gPotato | ETA: Out Now

After a year-long Beta and more updates than you can shake a Gibberling at, Allods Online has finally exited from Beta in Europe. To commemorate the occasion, gPotato.eu added yet another update, this time raising the level cap, introducing six new Allods and two high-level zones.

Forsaken World

Developer: Perfect World | ETA: Out Now

The world of Eyrda isn't the most peaceful of places, and the new Gaze of Larex update takes proceedings down an even darker route with a new boss taking over the Sleeping Jungle region. This forthcoming update will include a new dungeon, PvP arenas, marriage system and a raised level cap.



Lineage I

Developer: NCsoft | ETA: N/A

After a decade online, Lineage I will shutdown its Western servers on June 29th. All lapsed accounts have been reactivated and existing players can enjoy the game for free until the end. It's a sad but necessary retirement for this radical MMO, but thanks for the memories.



Hellgate: London

Developer: Hanabitssoft | ETA: Summer

Hanabitssoft has announced that they will relaunch Flagship Studio's formerly subscription MMO in a free-to-play capacity over the coming months, despite it being offline since 2009. The dark action RPG will relaunch in North America, with an EU release yet to be determined. Second time lucky, right?



Runes of Magic

Developer: Frogster | ETA: Out Now

On June 16th, the long-awaited fourth chapter, titled Lands of Despair, will be added to Runes of Magic's servers. This apocalyptic update marks the outbreak of a horrible plague which turns the infected insane. And if those dramatics don't float your boat here are some cold, hard numbers. LoD will include four new zones, two additional dungeons and all-new story events culminating in the Dwarves and Rhinos falling out with each other. If you've yet to sample this cute free-to-play MMO, now would be as good a time as any.



Guild Wars 2

Developer: NCsoft | ETA: 2012

Over the past month, NCsoft confirmed not only that ArenaNet's sequel won't arrive until 2012, but that there will be a testing phase for testers to join later in 2011. Hands up if you cannot wait to play this long overdue sequel?

2011

Star Wars: The Old Republic

SUMMER

Torchlight MMO

JULY

APB: Reloaded

JUNE

Dawn of Fantasy

ON
THE
RADAR

FREE
TO PLAY
MMORPG

Runes of Magic

CHAPTER IV

Lands of Despair

Runes of Magic

CHAPTER IV

Lands of Despair



PLAYBACK OPTIONS: ENHANCED

www.RunesofMagic.com



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Star Wars: The Old Republic

A Bounty Hunter's work is never done...

BioWare's first MMO is burdened with a lot of expectation. Despite multiple efforts, LucasArt's legendary license has yet to find an online offering worthy of its scope and presence. Sure we had SOE's Galaxies, but BioWare's effort is less about recreating the universe's nuts and bolts, and is instead about

placing you at centre of your own Republic versus Empire adventure. A lofty promise to be sure, but as we learned during our time playing as the Bounty Hunter class, it was an accurate one.

Each of the game's eight different classes, split between Empire and Republic forces, all have their own distinctive story arc and heroic missions designed to allow players to carve their own path in any given campaign. The result is that your experience with the Jedi Knight will be entirely different from your time as a Smuggler, not only because you'll begin on a different starter planet but also because your motivations, personality, conversation choices and quests will be entirely different. Undoubtedly this notion is very radical in the MMO genre, but it means that players will have at least eight different entirely unique campaigns to get through.

All of this sounds great on paper, but where exactly do the

The Bounty Hunter's arsenal is ready for almost any occasion.



Along the way you'll attract many followers to your cause.



**PREVIEW
FEEDBACK!**
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Star Wars: The
Old Republic



Prepare for an 'electrifying' experience. Ahem.



Nemro the Hutt, by effectively doing his dirty work.

Quest content is split between class-specific and non-class specific. The latter follows the typical MMO formula, with the added bonus of fully voiced characters and dialogue choices, whereas the former can only be initiated and completed by one version of the target class. Different Bounty Hunters could team up to complete quests, but most of the time, key plot moments needed players to split off to take part in their own instance. Initially it was confusing, but after the specific instance ends you can team up again to put the openworld to right, or complete standard quests. It's an interesting system which eliminates the problem of everyone being the hero. There's also an estimated completion time for everyone story instance, so your buddy knows how much free time they have before they can join in again.

The magic of Star Wars

Combat feels like the typical MMO affair tinged with some Star Wars magic. For Bounty Hunters, rifles or dual pistols are the specialisation at the start, with later abilities such as freezing foes in Carbonite and the powerful rocket launcher unlocking before level 10. Quests rarely involve the typical kill X of Y creature and tend to present some kind of morality-based choice, which is a nice touch to formulate your own identity.

"Quests rarely involve the typical kill X of Y creature and tend to present some kind of morality-based choice"

After finally winning the golden ticket from Nemro the Hutt, we were told to hotfoot it to the Imperial planet of Dromund Kaas via an [→](#)

WAITER, THERE'S AN MMO IN MY RPG

Old Republic is all about the power narrative but there are plenty of MMO elements in there, too...

[SHIPS](#)[ALLIES](#)[ADVANCED CLASSES](#)

At around level 15, players will acquire their own class-specific ship, allowing you to travel all over the galaxy. Your companions will also hang out here, enabling you to talk to them and take part in other 'stimulating' activities.



➔ Old Republic continued

massively multiplayer elements come in? Well, that's where our hands-on experience came in handy. Our Bounty Hunter adventures began on planet Hutta, which is also shared with the Imperial Agent class. Ruled by criminal gangs, our character was a mercenary who needed to win fame and recognition via The Great Hunt – the galaxy's most respected mercenary competition. To do this he'd have to earn an endorsement from the planet's criminal ruler, the irreverent

Old Republic continued

Imperial Shuttle. This initiated TOR's other ace in the hole: Flashpoints. These aren't openworld or class-specific, but bookend each of the campaign's three acts and are protracted PvE events. This one involved an invading Republican, who attempted to board and capture our luckless interplanetary carriage. There were plenty of conversation opportunities concerning a myriad of different characters and the opportunity to discuss the galactic unrest with a Grand Moff, too.

The instance was primarily geared towards introducing the grand galaxy-wide struggle, and was the first time our faction allegiance really came into play. Teaming up with other players was absolutely

"The Old Republic has all the MMO features that you'd expect"

essential, and this story-intensive instance was definitely the highlight of our hands-on.

The Old Republic has all the MMO features you'd expect, including PvP-specific arenas, an auction house and plenty of armour and weapons to lust over, but we got the sense it was more focused on the power of a good narrative, rather than accommodating enjoyable multiplayer experiences. These two facets have rarely, if ever, been combined into one MMO, and we'll only discover if BioWare are successful when servers are full of other adventurers. With the release only months away, the day of judgement is nigh. ●

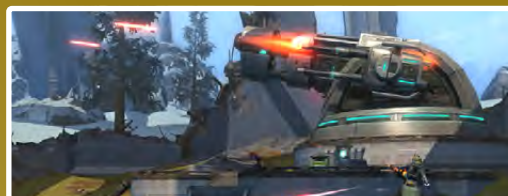


The sense of galactic turmoil only hit home during the Flashpoint.

KILLING IN THE NAME OF...

Warzones are The Old Republic's answer to PvP zones. We took part in a skirmish set in Alderaan which had two competing Republic and Empire teams attempting to take control of three separate points on the map. In an effort to control massive orbital cannons,

which have the power to take down each sides' capital ship orbiting above the battlefield. Rounds were fast paced and reminded us a lot of Global Agenda, except instead of nameless warriors all teaming up, it was a mix of Jedi, Trooper and smuggler vs Sith, Imperial Agent and Bounty Hunter.



MMOZine Verdict

Putting story at the forefront of MMO design, The Old Republic should be a winner

HOW COMPLETE



FIRST IMPRESSIONS





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Ready for war

Excited about PvP in the Star Wars universe? Us too, so we decided to find out more...

Could The Old Republic be the biggest MMO of the year? Quite possibly, and part of its success will depend on how it handles the PvP aspect of the game. We tried our Jedi Mind Trick skills on The Old Republic's Lead PvP Designer, Gabe Amatangelo.

You were known for working on Warhammer Online too, so what PvP aspects have come over from that?

I think the co-operative team PvP, like with everyone having

a purpose and a role. Making a tank, one of the core functions of health-based combat, and also rewarding that. Obviously there's a lot more stuff that we can't currently talk about, but that's what we can mention today.

Star Wars characters have certain expectations that go along with them that are far beyond the general 'Warrior', 'Mage' character choice, so how does the PvP elevate that cinematic feel to the combat?

I think the whole team has done

a tremendous job getting those themes across. You really feel like you're a Warrior doing a Force Choke, that you're being sneaky as a Smuggler or, as a Bounty Hunter. You'll just do anything to win; you're burning people down. So as far as PvP, well there's just so much in the toolbox to work with so it really isn't difficult to get that cinematic feel across.

Guarding is a good example of this. If a Jedi Knight is guarding then it's going to be more Force-orientated but it's still the primary function. If a Bounty Hunter is guarding then it's going to look like he's put some sort of shield deflector up. They're all visual things that stay within the theme, but the core functions are there.

"As far as PvP goes, there's just so much to in the toolbox to work with"



[➡️](#) Interview continued

We thought the Resolve bar was really interesting. Is it all about making PvP as accessible as possible?

One of the core goals is making PvP fun for what class you want to play as. To make it accessible without compromising the depth, and all the nuances that the experts will want to find and dig out. First and foremost, the visceral nature of the game does that kind of inherently.

Then there are the things like you're talking about, which include

the Resolve bar. In some other MMOs you have crowd control, which is just something that's inherent in the genre. It's one of the core functions of health-based combat. You have the health bar going up and going down and you have movement – those are the two dimensions of it, and one has a bar and the other doesn't. We just wanted to bring that together, and so are you're being cc-ed your Resolve bar goes up. Then when your Resolve bar is maxxed out, you're immune to cc. Over time though the Resolve diminishes and so you can be cc-ed once



There are plenty of options to create your perfect character.



Sometimes you'll just want to watch the battles.

 Interview continued

again. So with this system, when you hit them with a Stun and it doesn't work, then at least you'll know why not.

On some of the attacks it seems like the emphasis is more about the animation than the actual effect. How deliberate is that?

It's entirely deliberate. In the same way that the story is immersive, and the characters are immersive, we also wanted to make the other elements of the gameplay feel the same, including combat.

We're huge space combat fans, so have you considered

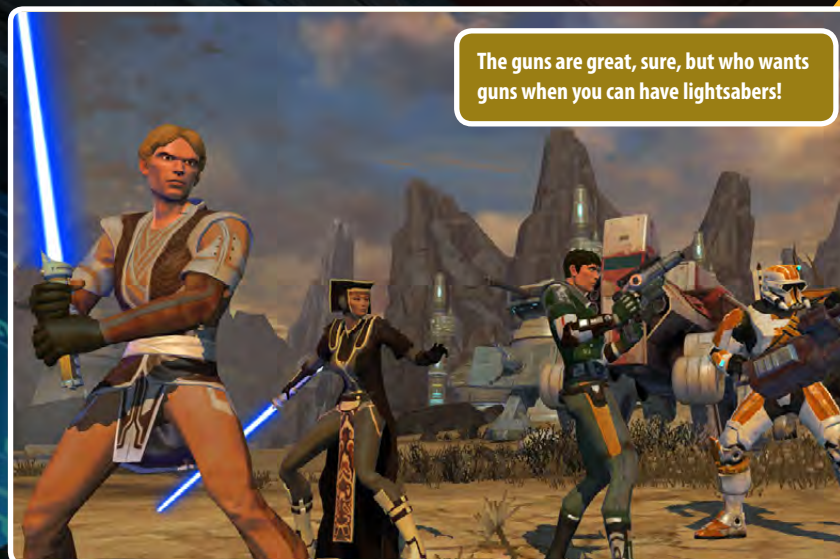
"At the end of a Warzone you can give a commendation to one player on your team"

exploring that aspect of the Star Wars universe at all?

Of course it's considered! Sadly though that's about all I can say about it at the moment.

How do you make the PvP so that you are incentivised to be helpful?

Through commendations. At the end of a Warzone you can give a commendation to one player on your team, not yourself though, and they will get bonuses based on your recommendation.



The guns are great, sure, but who wants guns when you can have lightsabers!

STAR WARS
OLD REPUBLIC

Publisher: EA

Developer:

BioWare Austin

Heritage: Baldur's Gate, Dragon Age, Knights of the Old Republic

Link: www.swtor.com

ETA: Autumn 2011

So people will be like: 'Hey, if I help this guy then maybe he'll recognise that.'

We also give badges for doing good teamwork things, like for example if you defend an objective then you get a badge; if you take an objective then you get a badge. At the same time though, players always want the path of least resistance. So if we say we give badges for defending and taking and we give badges for killing, it's like: which one's the fastest? Which one's the best? Through testing we worked out the best balance to give everyone the best teamwork match.

Are there going to be any benefits or rewards for teams?

Well, the score of your team effects the reward you get, so you want your team to win! Even if your team's losing then you want to

make it a close match because your rewards will be larger. Very often in PvP people leave because they see their team losing, but here the advantage will be for them to stay; they'll want to make that comeback because completing gives you a reward, and you don't get your rewards until the end of the match. ●



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Rusty Hearts

Want a MMO with the emphasis on the massive? Meet a game that promises battles on an epic scale

"We've been influenced by some of the best brawlers and arcade-style fighters out there"

Checked out our First Look on Rusty Hearts in this issue? Eager to know even more? Well folks, your luck's in, as we've also got an interview for you with Jonathan Belliss, the game's Executive Producer...

Can you describe Rusty Hearts' core gameplay and key features?

Rusty Hearts is a fast-paced multiplayer online action game with fast-paced and highly stylised beat-'em-up style combat, combined with a solo or team-based dungeon



exploration experience. Become a unique hero and engage in epic monster battles, collect valuable loot, and explore a beautifully visualised, anime-inspired world.

What are the key videogame concepts that inspired the developers of Rusty Hearts?

Action, action, and more action! We've been influenced by some of the best brawlers and arcade-style fighters out there. Rusty Hearts has a similar feel to games such as Castle Crashers or Scott Pilgrim. The fighting game vibe in Rusty Hearts also resembles games such as Marvel vs. Capcom 3 or Street Fighter IV, which gets players to string together the best combo moves possible. Hitting the right combos is the key to success in battle.

As big fans of the Devil May Cry series, the mix of stylish heroes and intense fights in a dark Gothic environment definitely inspired us during the making of Rusty Hearts.

Did the game developer studio have a specific anime/manga series in mind when creating Rusty Hearts?



There's nothing like a well-placed spell for clearing the battleground.

Indeed. Bits and pieces of various anime/manga series, such as the fast and furious battles in Naruto and Dragon Ball, the background and storyline in Bleach and the elements in Full Metal Alchemist inspired us to create the stylistic anime-like world in Rusty Hearts.

What are the minimum and ideal PC specifications needed to play Rusty Hearts?

At a minimum, the game will run with the following specs: a processor such as the Pentium 4 1.4 GHz, 1Gb of RAM and a video card with 128 Mb of RAM. To get the very best experience possible though, we recommend that you use an Intel Core 2 Duo 2.5 GHz, 2Gb of RAM and a video card with 256Mb of RAM.

For those itching to try it, when will the Beta take place?

Interview continued

Closed Beta is currently scheduled for July 2011, so we recommend readers that they check the Rusty Hearts website often as we continue to post more details about the closed Beta – <http://rustyhearts.perfectworld.com>

Will Rusty Hearts run as a true free-to-play game?

Rusty Hearts, like all Perfect World Entertainment games, is free-to-play so there's very little to lose and a whole lot to gain if you get into the game. With no monthly subscription fees, you can invite as many of your

"Rusty Hearts is free-to-play, so there's very little to lose and a lot to gain"

friends to whip up nasty combo attacks and fight together!

Can you share additional details about the game's unique heroes and their background?

Along with other interesting heroes in Rusty Hearts, Angela and Tude are a duo of fighters. Angela is a witch with magical skills who has made it her destiny to fight Lord Vlad, the leader of the vampire armies. ➔



Publisher: Perfect World Entertainment

Developer:

Stairway Games

Heritage: N/A

Link: <http://rustyhearts.perfectworld.com>

ETA: 2011





CASTLE OF HEROES

CASTLE OF HEROES

Tutorial : Account creation

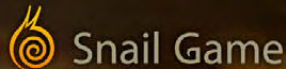
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TERA

Publisher:

Frogster Interactive

Developer:

Bluehole Studios

Heritage: N/A

Link: www.tera-europe.com/en/index.html

ETA: 2011

TERA

A diamond from the East

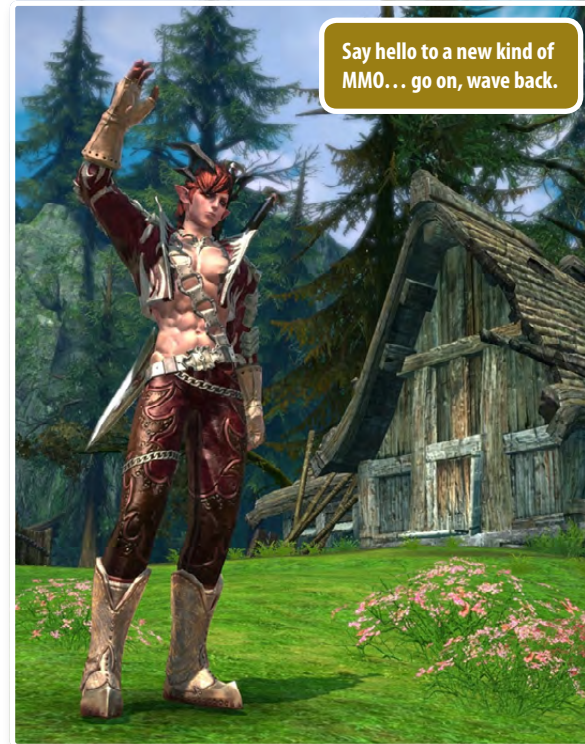
It's been almost a year since we checked in on the effort to bring Korea's other big MMO to the Western masses, and unsurprisingly TERA has come on leaps and bounds. Already out in the East and boasting a concurrent user record of nearly 150,000 players (and therefore outperforming Aion), we were really excited to finally play the outstandingly beautiful premium MMO in its distinctly European flavour.

Frogster are still working intensively with Bluehole Studios to ensure this year's launch goes off without a hitch, packing all-new quest content (totalling over 600), eliminating the need to grind between levels and making sure the world's different foibles and nuances are communicated properly. We covered the basics last time around, with the game's eight different classes, seven imaginatively designed races

"Any damage caused by an attack in TERA is entirely dependent on a player's aim"

and the use of Epic's Unreal 3 Engine to power the game, but what we didn't talk about was the revolutionary active combat system. Like a first-person shooter, any damage caused by an attack in TERA is entirely dependent on a player's aim. Hits to the head or body cause more harm than aiming for appendages, and it allows combat to be given an added physical resonance. Coupling this with the ability to combo

Say hello to a new kind of MMO... go on, wave back.



**PREVIEW
FEEDBACK!**
Click here to tell us what you think of TERA



Spells warp and bend the air around them, creating some impressive physics and lighting effects.

A few of the armour choices can be charitably described as 'revealing.'

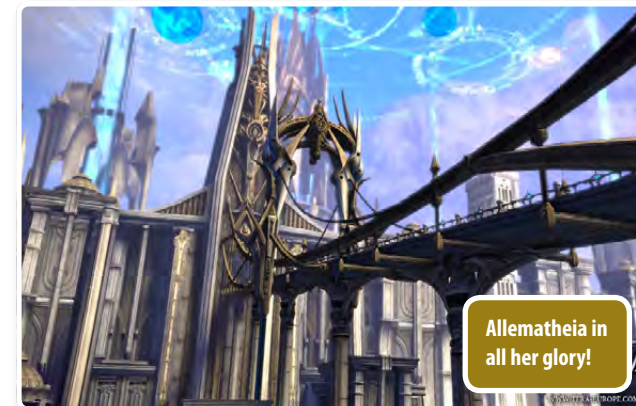




TERA continued

attacks by moves appearing by your reticule contextually, results in an experience which is much more exciting and engaging than the typical auto-target approach. Whether playing as a ranged Mystic or a close-quarters Warrior, this combat system functions very well and looks absolutely beautiful thanks to some exquisite character design and spell effects.

The eye candy doesn't end there though, as each of TERA's different locales are split across two massive continents and boast a level of art design which is right up there with the likes of Blizzard and ArenaNet, as showcased by the trailer below. Each area has its own flavour, with the dark and foreboding Castanic capital proving a sharp contrast to



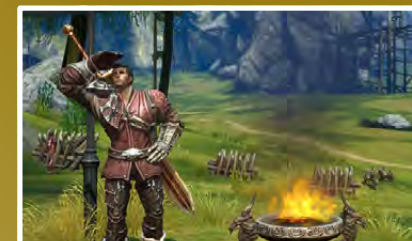
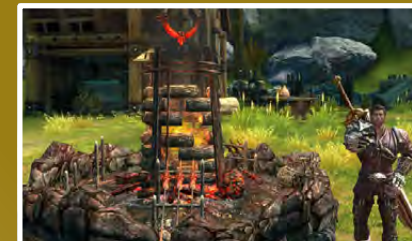
the futuristic and elegant High Elves' city of Alلماتheia.

Character skillsets have also been given an overhaul, with a Glyph system allowing players to modify each of their skills. As many as three of these modifiers – which will reduce mana cost or increase the chance of a critical hit etc. – can be applied to any skill and will be



MEET BY THE CAMPFIRE

Everyone knows teaming up in MMOs can be tricky. There are reliable tactics such as spamming chat with 'LFG' or posting your request in the group menu, but sometimes you want to team up more organically. This is where TERA's campfire system comes in. As you quest in the world you'll notice your stamina slowly diminishing, and the best way to recharge is by erecting a campfire, which can be placed anywhere in the world. Permanent and portable camps not only buff you, but also help passers-by as well. This is a great way to meet others before tackling a local dungeon together.



TERA

➔ TERA continued

earned via quests. These modifiers can be swapped and changed at any time, via specific vendors, and Frogster hope this system should level the combat playing field, enabling less-active but more talented players to get the jump on their more committed colleagues.

Aside from the visual prowess there's also all the features you'd expect from a new MMO, with

instanced PvP for teams consisting of five and 10 players, the ability to deploy your own NPC merchants to sell unwanted goods, and glamorous mounts, as well as a radical new political infrastructure which allows leaders of guilds to control and rule over certain towns in the world. Frogster were sketchy on the details, but Mayors would be chosen via a diplomatic system and they'd be able to upgrade a town's facilities and charge taxes.

BOSS BATTLES WITH A DIFFERENCE

One of TERA's more original concepts is the way the game tackles boss battles. You'll notice these bigger monsters not only bookending quests but also roaming the openworld looking for blood. Most bosses will have multiple phases of attacks, communicated by their form transforming, and they'll have tells to indicate when they're going to dish out a particularly meaty attack. We faced the mean-looking warrior on the right below, and he took almost 10 minutes to take down!



TERA's HUD has a minimalist design, but is fully customisable.

Needless to say TERA has a lot of revolutionary strings to its beautiful bow and it certainly isn't a game anyone should dismiss willy-nilly. Among the Western MMO community there's an air of superiority when it comes to Korean titles, but after our playtest it's very clear that this offering is shaping up to completely dispel misconceptions of grind. The release date has yet to be nailed down, but from what we played, this exciting title is well on the way to being ready for mass consumption in the West. ●

MMOZine Verdict

Trust us, you've never played an MMO like this before

HOW COMPLETE



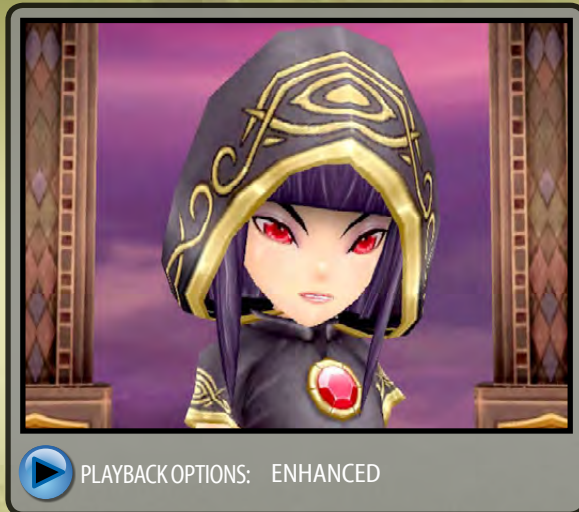
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Publisher: Blizzard
Developer: Blizzard
Heritage: Diablo II,
StarCraft II, Warcraft III
Link: www.wow-europe.com
ETA: Summer

World of Warcraft 4.2: Rage of the Firelands

Ragnaros, we're coming for you!

After the disappointment that was Rise of the Zandalari, it's time for the main event. Yes 4.2 (aka Rage of the Firelands) is now on the horizon and, boy are we ready for it.

So here's the 411. The end of the questline in Hyjal had us – and a team of super powerful NPCs – kicking Ragnaros' arse back into the Firelands. Hyjal was reclaimed

and the rebuilding began but the Firelord is not done yet. Yes, it's just another setback, and Raggy is ready for the Final Showdown and he's brought six minions with him. These include Balec the Gatekeeper, an ex-Green Dragon turned firehawk, a creepy spider called Beth'tilac, a magma-monster in the form of Lord Rhyolith and Shannox and his menagerie of lethal pets.

The Firelands, the extra-dimensional plane of flamey nastiness, is the location for the actual raid but also a Quel'Danas-like daily quest hub. The idea is you go in, do the quests and new sections open up, except rather than being a universal thing, this is very personal. Blizzard's jiggerypokery means not only do you get a personalised experience but you can still see your pals.

The thing about these dailies is that it's a long-term project, so you're not going to be seeing new parts of the Firelands every day.

Rather, progress will be determined by the number of Marks of the World Tree that you gather. The quests are only accessible once you've completed the original Hyjal questline (so go and do it now!)



"The end of the questline in Hyjal has us kicking Ragnaros' arse back into the Firelands"



Blue dragons are back in vogue and you can finally become one with the new legendary staff.



WoW 4.2 continued

However the quests leading into the Firelands are thick with lore and intrigue, including the welcome return of the white stag Malorne.

The dailies areas offer choice and variety of quests as well as two new factions. You have to choose to help either the Shadow Wardens or the Druids of the Talon, and each get their own specific areas in which you can do quests, helping keep Hyjal in the hands of the mortal races instead of ceding it to Ragnaros.

The actual raid offers seven bosses, including Ragnaros' new Majordomo, ex Archdruid Fandral Staghelm. The best part

is you'll have a choice about which order you want to do the first four bosses. It's great to have a choice and the bosses themselves look amazing, especially Staghelm (who has fiery druidic forms) to the firehawk Alysrazor.

For you raiders there's another legendary weapon incoming. This time it's a gorgeous staff called Dragonwrath, Tarecgosa's Rest, which will allow you to take the form of a mighty blue dragoness named Tarecgosa (and gift your raiding guildmates with a mini version of her as a pet).

As the name suggests, this is a lore-centric quest which will see you trying to help the Blue Dragonflight find its new leader and get shiny loot at the same time. It's one for both raiders and fans of lore but the journey to getting this new weapon is long and difficult. It will also include new scripted events in the Caverns of Time, the Nexus and the appearance of Norzdormu in his sexy new NPC model (obviously inspired by a certain Prince who lived in Persia).

The second questline focuses on everyone's favourite poster Orc, Thrall. The Shaman's spirit has been cast into the four elemental planes which will see you end Ragnaros but also revisit the other major dungeons: the Skywall, Deepholm and the Abyssal Maw. Rescuing him will be your main reason to go deal with Ragnaros as he's the force whose been holding Azeroth together since the Cataclysm.



STAFF AWARENESS

Blizzard is offering a new staff to anyone brave enough to help the Blue Dragonflight...

DRAGON-
WRATH

RETURN
TO NEXUS

RAGNAROS

This is the gorgeous staff you have a chance to get your hands on.



→ Wow 4.2 continued

To make the transition from tier 1 raiding to the Firelands a tad easier, Blizzard are planning to nerf or, as they're putting it, 'receiving a comprehensive set of tuning adjustments to decrease their difficulty' the 10- and 25-man raid encounters. Basically, they're going from superhard to much, much easier and, obviously, this is going to be very contentious when it makes it to live servers. The hardcore raiders are going to be annoyed; the casual raiders elated.

But of course, World of Warcraft is not just about raiding and there are plenty of new things happening. Blizzard will be introducing the Encounter Journal, a guide to all Cataclysm's bosses that will outline their abilities and loot but not

"World of Warcraft is not just about raiding and there are plenty of new things happening"

actually walk you through how to kill the bosses. The journal not only looks awesome, it also serves a very practical purpose and is yet another reason to stop players needing to Alt-Tab between WoW and their web browser. Oh, and they'll finally be scrapping the keyring.

Blizzard is really pushing the boat out to make up for 4.1. They're implementing a truly epic raid, new locations and plenty of content to do if you're level 85. If you're a fan of lore or just killing elemental lords then this is the patch for you and it shouldn't be too long before it goes live. ●



Hyjal is now home to two factions. This is a Shadow Warden, familiar to anyone who played Warcraft II and III.

RAGNAROS: A PRIMER

Ragnaros is one of the most well-known bosses in Azerothian history. The Firelord was first defeated in Molton Core, an epic forty-person encounter which took you into the depths of Blackrock Mountain. Summoned by his Majordomo, Executus, he was defeated and cast back into the Firelands, his native plane. But Ragnaros was brought back by Deathwing just after the Shattering to menace Mount Hyjal and burn the World Tree, Nordrassil. He was beaten back by brave champions (that's us) and now awaits us in his inner sanctum.



MMOZine Verdict

Blizzard are trying to make up for 4.1, and they look on target to succeed

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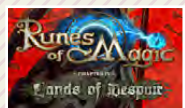
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**Publisher:** Frogster**Developer:** Runewaker Entertainment Ltd.**Heritage:** Runes of Magic**Link:** www.runesofmagic.com**ETA:** 16th June

Runes of Magic: The Lands of Despair

Despair has never been exciting

PREVIEW FEEDBACK! [Click here to tell us what you think of Runes of Magic: The Lands of Despair](#)

It's been over two years since Runes of Magic exploded onto the MMO scene and it has made its mark on a very competitive niche within the gaming industry. RoM shined because it was free to play and offered a fantastical world with a strong focus on class combinations and professions. The lore was rich and the quality amazing for a freemium title, yet RoM also used micro-transactions to allow players to buy items and

regularly offered expansions and new content which meant it quickly became the free-to-play equivalent of World of Warcraft.

Fast forward 26 months and another expansion is looming. Lands of Despair will be the fourth chapter in this popular MMO and ushers players into Malevolence, a terrifying place where the populace has been struck down by a strange plague. The land itself is very dark and spooky with swamps and a particularly gothic vibe that will send shivers down your spine – and for a very good reason.

Frogster have issued a little info on the storyline and the cause of this illness: "Many of the region's inhabitants have been struck down by an unknown sickness, with their only hope of survival coming from the curative effects of a mysterious Divine Fruit being sold by a travelling merchant. But this is not quite what he seems. He is in fact none other than the fearsome

and devious Demon Sismond, who spread this pestilence and is slowly but surely turning the region's people into mindless zombies."

Ooh zombies! Everyone loves zombies, right? Except when it's

"Lands of Despair will be the fourth chapter in this popular MMO and ushers players into Malevolence"



The Land of Malevolence is strangely beautiful and dangerous.



For a free-to-play MMO, *Runes of Magic* continues to boast beautiful graphics.

"Lands of Despair also introduces two new races: Fireboot Dwarves and the Rhino People"

"When she awoke to find her father lying lifelessly on the floor, Sismond made light work of manipulating her to his desires. Annelia allowed him to implant the rune heart into her father's chest, breathing life back into his body. Alas, while blood now once more ran through her father's body, he awoke a shadow of his former self. The rune heart, now beating away in his chest, had restored his physical self, but at the cost of his humanity."

Annelia has become the Puppet Master and Lord Herl Grafu a pale and insane shadow of his former self, but Sismond has even more planned than just the corruption of a girl and her father.

Lands of Despair also introduces new races in the form of the Fireboot Dwarves and the Rhino people of the Kalo Principality. Sismond had a Dwarf murder Lanaik, son of the Kalon nobility and now the two races are at each others' throats. A war is about to begin and Sismond is right at the middle, using the conflict to further his plans. His servants wander the battlefields, taking the corpses so their master can use them for his own ends. What those are



EXPLORING MALEVOLENCE

Lands of Despair is a massive new update to a much-loved MMO. What can we expect when it ships in June?

RHINOS!

SPIDERY BOSS!

JESTERS! CLOWNS!

The Kalo are one of two new races that are being added to the game. And yes, they're rhinos.



➔ The Lands of Despair cont.

your nearest and dearest. But creating zombies is just part of Sismond's devious plan. The demon is actually looking for Annelia Grafu, a young girl at death's door thanks to a heart condition. The demon, in his form as a merchant, plants an idea in her father's head that to save the girl, she must be given a heart forged from runes.

Lord Grafu is a smart guy though, and isn't going to entrust his child's life to some wandering merchant. He does something even more stupid and noble, offering his own heart. Frogster continued their sneak peek and the Annelia's transformation into Sismond's devoted apprentice.



➔ **The Lands of Despair** cont.

we do not know but it certainly can't be good.

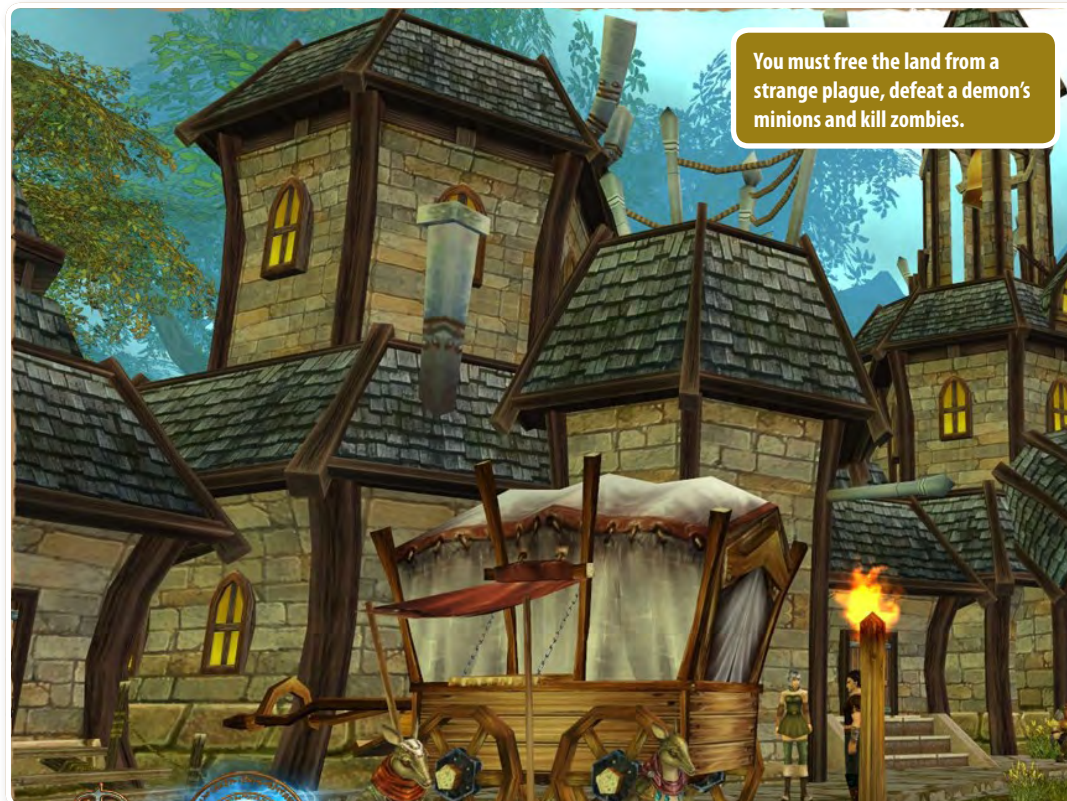
This conflict sends you to the Redhill Mountains, a gorgeous new zone where a war is brewing. A much brighter, more uplifting place than the area around Castle Grafu, the zone features distinctive architecture for each race and breathtaking views, but at its heart is a bloody conflict which could be avoided and time is running out.

This is where you, the champions of Taborea, come in. The land of Malevolence is in chaos and it's you're the last chance. There's going to be plenty to do, from slaughtering zombies, rescuing villagers addicted to Sismond's Divine Fruit and killing even more zombies. Watch out when you

"The conflict sends you to the Redhill Mountains, a gorgeous new zone where a war is brewing"

wander into the swamp as there's also a spidery world boss waiting for you – which is definitely not one for arachnophobics.

You're also going to have to put a stop to the war between the Kalon Rhinos and the Fireboots as well as unmask Lanai's murderer. By doing that you cut off Sismond's corpse supply and then, when you and your friends are ready, it will be time to enter Castle Grafu and put Herl and Annelia out of their misery and end their suffering. It's not going to be easy but the people of Taborea are depending on you! ●

**GRAFU CASTLE**

Lord Grafu and Annelia will be the final bosses of a new instance, Grafu Castle, being incorporated into Lands of Despair. The dungeon, which is aimed at between six and 12 players, has a number of boss encounters as you wander through its spooky halls. While Lord Grafu, with his spooky clown-like jester outfit and Annelia doll, is incredibly creepy they're not the only bosses. There are seven encounters, including a magician and his terrifying teddy bear.

**MMOZine Verdict**

Runes of Magic continues to amaze with new content worth of a subscription MMO

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**Publisher:** Gala

Networks Europe

Developer: Astrum Nival**Heritage:** Rage of Mages**Link:** [http://en.allods.](http://en.allods.gpotato.eu)

gpotato.eu

OUT NOW

Allods Online

Rage of Mages reborn for the MMO age. Why you need to check out Allods Online

"Allods Online focuses on the Astral, the source of magic within the Allods universe"

INTO THE ASTRAL

The Astral is a dangerous place and it's also three dimensional, which adds to the fun. But you can't go into it unless you have a suitable ship, created from Allods. Even then, it's a perilous places where storms rage and demons pray on travellers. You also have to watch out for other ships wandering the Astral, as most will be foe rather than friend.

Once you hit level 35 you'll begin a series of quests to create your own ship. This will be a long process and involve collecting materials and also finding a crew. You'll need a captain (who is the person who owns the ship), a helmsman, navigator, visor, repair chief and cannoneers. But these ships are not just ships, they're basically your home while in the Allods Universe and you will be able to customise any ship you own to your liking.



ALLODS AND MAGES AND MAGIC, OH MY!

Allods Online focuses on the Astral, the source of magic within the Allods universe. According to the game's lore: "Long ago, the world of Sarnaut appeared from the Astral, but after many aeons this world was destroyed – shattered into countless floating islands called Allods. The Astral continued its onslaught, devouring these Allods and all things upon them, even life, until the Great Mages discovered a way to hold it at bay and protect the few who remained."

[Roll over screen for annotations](#)



[Allods Online](#) cont.

ALLODS ALLODS EVERYWHERE

Floating in the Astral are Allods and there are many different ones to visit. Allods Online is launching with a new volume called Astral Odyssey. This includes two new Allods for high-level players of 42 and above. One Allod is called the Isle of Revelation and another named Kirah, a place with its own scarred past...

"A century ago, the tiny Allod of Kirah was rich with the meteorite needed to transverse the vast Astral. Hungry for advantage in their ongoing war against the Empire, the League army invaded Kirah, hoping to claim its resources as their own. The Empire, however, put up a bitter fight, and after a night of fierce fighting, dawn rose on a bloody battlefield with many dead on both sides. It was then, when both great armies were at their weakest, that tragedy struck. The Astral itself seemed to tear open and begin devouring Kirah. Demons flooded from the tear and destroyed entire armadas of fleeing ships. When all was said and done, Kirah had been destroyed and a scant handful of survivors limped towards their home cities."



TIME AND AGAIN

Astral Odyssey also promises a chance to take adventurous players back in time. The mysterious Director, who challenged Beta players with the trials of Gipat, will guide adventurers as they head towards their destiny and meddle with the stream of time itself.

He poses the question: What if you could create a new past? What if the League and Empire joined forces against the demons flooding out of the Astral sent them packing? This is the true task behind Allods Online's fourth volume, as you travel back into the past to change an event pivotal to the Astral's development and, hopefully, create a better future.



BLAST FROM THE PAST

In the late 1990s an RPG game was created by Russian company Nival Interactive which introduced a magical universe populated by islands called Allods that float in the Astral, the space between worlds. The first game, Rage of Mages, was released in 1998 with a sequel published in 1999, and now it's time to return to the Astral with the release of Allods Online, a new incarnation which brings the series into the realm of the massively multiplayer online game.



[Allods Online](#) cont.

"Allods Online offers players a wide choice of 28 different classes and six different races"

ALLODS ONLINE 101

Allods Online offers players a chance to join either the League or the Empire, and offers a wide choice of 28 different classes and six different races. As you explore you can customise your character's skills and talents.

You can also play as you like, either on your own or in groups with friends or your guild – you can even raid and do PvP. In fact, you can even do ship-versus-ship battles deep in the Astral!



A SHIP TO CALL MY OWN

As you level up you can gather resources to make your own ship or join someone else's, and the game itself is free-to-play. Allods Online offers thousands of quests and a level cap of 47, which gives you plenty to see and do as you explore the Allods universe. The game also features an epic back-story and a beautiful soundtrack.

The game itself is free to play. All you need is a Windows machine and an account, but if you want then you can supplement your experience through micro-transactions using the in-game store.



In MMOZine Issue 31



THE RUNES OF MAGIC: THE LANDS OF DESPAIR

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www.cranberrypublishing.com

Publishing Director: Dave Taylor

Email: dave.taylor@cranberrypublishing.com

Editorial Director: Dan Hutchinson

Email: dan.hutchinson@cranberrypublishing.com

Commercial Director: Duncan Ferguson

Email: duncan.ferguson@cranberrypublishing.com

Telephone: 07770 648500

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